
Social Science Journals

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"MARCH, ACCORDING TO FOLK WEATHER LORE, comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb," writes an eminent social scientist. "Similarly, the nineteen-fifties may be said to have come in with a roaring antipathy to the social sciences and to be departing with attitudes of positive interest and quiet acceptance."¹ Nowhere is this welcome change better illustrated than in the publishing of periodicals. The last decade has produced an extraordinary increase in the number of journals "concerned primarily with man and his endless and varied relationships." According to UNESCO statistics, there were 949 general social science journals published in 1955, ninety-four in the United States. If we include education and history among the social disciplines, this figure would be much higher, and it is still rising.² (According to *Historical Abstracts* there are 145 historical periodicals published in the United States.) Granting certain inconsistencies in classifying social science periodicals and perhaps the inclusion of some marginal titles, the number of outlets for researchers in these fields stands at an all-time high.

The term *social science* is, of course, a very broad concept covering many topics and meaning different things to different people. For the purposes of this paper, the term will be defined arbitrarily to include political science, history, sociology and anthropology, education, and psychology. The current trends of research in these vast subject areas are many and complex. It is difficult, therefore, to make a simple statement about them that will satisfy most observers. There is a pronounced tendency in the newer disciplines toward a fragmentation of intellectual interests and research activities, which are becoming ever more specialized. Today, a large university will have 7 or 8 separate social science departments which offer 5 or more different fields of

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study. As knowledge increases, hitherto neglected subdivisions or areas of specialization come to the front.

It is further worth pointing out that we are living in an age of interdisciplinary collaboration and that many new periodicals do not fit into neat categories. Typical of reviews which are broad in scope and methodological responsibility is the *International Social Science Journal*, published by UNESCO since 1949. The I.S.S.J. serves as the official organ for the international associations for comparative law, political science, economics, and sociology. It combines current information on UNESCO's work and publications with articles whose subject matter crosses over the traditional boundaries. The I.S.S.J. stands without much competition, though the *Revista interamericana de ciencias sociales* shows promise of imitating its tendency toward cross-fertilization. In some respects the *American Behavioral Scientist* is most similar to it in conception. The articles in this latter journal represent the running edge of knowledge in several allied fields. All three periodicals are relatively new.

The science of government is of course one of the senior social sciences. Perhaps as a consequence, the methodology and subject matter in political science are more precisely defined than in the newer disciplines. The grip of habit is strong. Many recently-established journals in this field conform to traditional patterns. Thus we find that the *Midwest Journal of Political Science* (1957) is modeled on the *Western Political Quarterly* (1948); and that *Orbis, a Journal of World Affairs* (1957), is similar in conception to *World Politics* (1948). To a somewhat lesser extent this is also true of the new Canadian, Indian, Philippine, and Spanish journals which grapple with the workaday problems of public administration. Also worthy of note as showing the influence of American research techniques and methodology on European scholarship are two new periodicals dealing with public opinion, the *Spanish Opinion* (1952) and the Italian *Opinione* (1956).

Political science, like everything else, is changing. Intimately related to these changes is the widespread growth in the number of reviews dealing with special aspects of contemporary politics and international relations. Outstanding among such reviews are the *Journal of Conflict Resolution: for Research Related to War and Peace* (1957) and *Poland and Germany* (1957). One of the most conspicuous developments in American higher education in recent years has been the creation of area studies programs. Political scientists

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have figured prominently in this development. Naturally enough, the rise of these programs has produced a growing body of literature both popular and scholarly—journals such as *Middle East Digest* (1957), *Africa Report* (1956), the *Polish Review* (1956), and *Journal of Inter-American Studies* (1959). Most of these periodicals are inevitably very weak and need help or at least encouragement if they are to survive. The result is that the mortality rate among them is very high. It often seems to serials librarians that no sooner has a subscription been entered than the periodical passes out of existence.

In addition, interdisciplinary newsletters on specific areas have been prepared and circulated. Owing to the very nature of these publications, however, their subject matter is largely topical and without much lasting value. Librarians may reasonably hesitate to make them a permanent part of their collections.

In recent years, too, more comprehensive research studies dealing with increasingly basic and complex problems have lead to the establishment of a myriad of journals dealing with political and economic development. The infinite variety of new materials of social science interest presents a constant challenge to both the political scientist and the librarian. A most useful bibliographical journal is the *International Political Science Abstracts* (1951), issued under the sponsorship of UNESCO. It abstracts articles in over 70 periodicals published in all countries and in all languages.

History continues to hold a predominant position among the social disciplines. As with political science, however, it is changing rapidly. No episode, no aspect of human activity seems too unimportant to historians to deserve careful and erudite investigation. "The traditional political-military history has become more comprehensive and more analytical," an eminent historian has observed, "and has been reinforced by researches into the social, economic, intellectual, scientific, and other aspects of the past, some of them truly remote from what used to be considered history."³

There has always been a relatively large number of historical publications and a still larger number of general periodicals which publish historical articles upon occasion. As a social science, however, history follows the schizophrenic tendency toward specialization. Outstanding among new specialized journals in the field of American history are *Civil War History* (1955) and the *Cotton History Review* (1960). *Arizona and the West* (1959), sponsored by the University of Arizona, is addressed to teachers of Western history and more especially to

collectors and readers of Western Americana. Unique in its field, *Labor History* (1960) presents original research on the American labor movement and its development.

In world history this trend toward specialization is no less apparent. Worthy of note are the *Journal of African History* (1960), *French Historical Studies* (1958), and *Social History of the Orient* (1957). *Economia e Storia* (1954), *Journal of the Economic and* published quarterly at Milan but greatly influenced by American scholars, is an excellent scholarly publication in an expanding field.

By way of contrast, the *Journal of World History* (1953), published under the auspices of UNESCO, hopes "to permit scholars of all nations to participate in an exchange of ideas on the problems of interpretation and presentation which arise in the course of writing a history of the scientific and cultural development of humanity." At the University of Chicago *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (1958), an international quarterly now in its third year, attempts to make an exact science out of history and to lend a historical dimension to sociology. Its articles present events, institutions, and processes of change in such a way as to enable new comparisons to be made among societies and across epochs. *History and Theory* (1960), published at The Hague but edited in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is the first international review specifically devoted to the philosophy of history. It aims to provide a forum in which practicing historians and philosophers can deal with common problems. In an effort to fill the gap in historical documentation *Historical Abstracts* (1955) abstracts articles from over 500 periodicals on the political, diplomatic, economic, social, cultural, and intellectual history of the period 1775-1945. Last, but by no means least, *American Heritage* (1949) and to a lesser extent *Horizon* (1958) are bringing the results of historical scholarship to a wide and appreciative audience.

Psychology is concerned with the individual as against the institution or the total historical setting. Human behavior is a complex affair, but everyone pretends to analyze it or at least to understand it. "Most men turn amateur psychologist, pure or applied, at some time in their lives," says a recent observer, "and the best of these amateurs have made contributions whose importance may not be discounted even in our very much more organized day and age."⁴ In spite of this, psychologists, like most other social scientists, have become a highly-trained group of professionals with specialized interests and activities.

Illustrative of this trend are *Psychological Record: a Quarterly*

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Journal of Theoretical and Experimental Psychology (1951), the *International Journal of Sociometry and Sociatry* (1956), and *Perceptual and Motor Skills* (1955). In the past decade, increasing attention has been paid to the practical applications of psychological theories. Outstanding among new journals in this field are the *Behavioral Scientist* (1956), the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* (1954), and *Engineering and Industrial Psychology* (1959). The *International Journal of Parapsychology* (1959), reporting a scientific heresy, published studies of many unknown facets of the human mind. Most impressive of all, perhaps, is *Contemporary Psychology* (1956), a monthly reviewing journal which serves as a comprehensive and up-to-date guide to the literature in the field.

Sociology is a relative newcomer among the social sciences. It "has only recently emerged out of divergent traditions and continues to be refined and modified."⁵ Today sociologists are still somewhat divided into schools of thought by the persistence of conflicting theoretical viewpoints, but there is a growing agreement upon fundamental methodological issues. Most social scientists are leaving the seclusion of their studies to engage in field work. As their endeavors increase the systematic body of knowledge, specialization becomes the rule. More and more journals are set up to serve as platforms for the exchange of ideas and research findings.

The *Pacific Sociological Review* (1958), the official organ of the Pacific Sociological Society, is worthy of note. It publishes articles selected from papers presented at the annual meeting of the organization. Lately, the *Sociological Quarterly* (1960) has grown from a regional journal (*The Midwest Sociologist*) to a periodical of national importance and readership. Its editors hope to maintain a fair balance between empirical research reports and interpretive writing. Especially notable also are the *Journal of Human Relations* (1952) and the *Journal of Family Welfare* (1954).

In the postwar years increasing attention has been paid to demographic research in such journals as *Population Bulletin* (1945) and *Population Studies* (1948). Much of this research, however, appears in periodicals in related fields or in the serial publications of university institutes. Finally, *Current Sociology* (1952), prepared for the International Association of Sociology with the support of UNESCO, publishes trend reports and bibliographies of interest to researchers in special fields. American sociologists have been very active in the formation and continuation of this journal.

Anthropology, like sociology, is a relative newcomer among the social sciences. It is important to note, however, that the pattern of development outlined for political science, psychology, and sociology is here repeated. As the subject constantly expands and attains age, new interests and emphases appear. The last decade has seen a marked increase in the number of specialized journals set up to serve as sounding boards for the fields which make up anthropology. *Expedition* (1958), which presents the findings of archaeologists, is published by the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. *Katunob* (1960), published at Southern State College, Arkansas, concerns itself with Mesoamerican anthropology. *Science of Man*, an official organ of the National Association of Local Anthropology, aims to give a popular presentation of the story of archaeology, ethnology, and allied sciences. By contrast, *Anthropological Linguistics* (1959) has a narrow professional audience in mind.

In Britain the pattern of development is similar. *Physical Anthropology*, which traditionally included problems of human evolution and primatology, focuses now upon human biology and institutions. The former tendency to cross interdisciplinary boundaries is lessening. One of the most important developments in anthropological literature has been the establishment of a new synthesizing journal. *Current Anthropology* (1960) has for its main function the creation of a mutual understanding among the different traditions of anthropology that exist in different parts of the world. It proposes to unite in a common forum people who define the subject differently and thus to promote a free exchange of conclusions and hypotheses.

Education as a unified discipline is concerned with "the total pattern of preparation, formal and informal, that results in the professional growth of teachers."⁶ It includes such fields as child study, educational psychology, curriculum, special and general methods, supervision, etc., all of which have special journals. In the past decade, the trend to specialization, previously great, has continued. Most recently-established reviews of a specialized nature, such as the *Journal of Teacher Education* (1950), the *Journal of Developmental Reading* (1957), and the *History of Education Quarterly* (1961), merely fill voids in professional education literature. *Comparative Education Review* (1957) aspires to be a clearing house of basic data and resources for the effective teaching of comparative education in colleges and universities.

In certain respects the most important trend in educational periodi-

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cals is the publishing of additional general and synthesizing journals. *Educational Theory* (1951), an organ of the John Dewey Society and the Philosophy of Education Society, seeks to foster continuing development of educational theory and to encourage wide and effective discussion of theoretical problems within the educational profession. *Education Summary* (1948), a semimonthly newsletter, reports on new developments, trends, ideas, and research in education. *The International Review of Education* (1955), published with the cooperation of UNESCO, contains contributions in three languages. It hopes to provide a meeting place for men and women from every country whose thoughts and actions deserve the attention of educationalists throughout the world.

In summary, the postwar years have witnessed an unprecedented upsurge of interest and activity in the social disciplines. A notable increase in publications has occurred and an increase in the number and quality of specialized journals. It has come to be realized, however, that overspecialization inevitably leads to misunderstanding, to loss of time, and eventually to a breakdown in communications among specialists. In an effort to forestall this breakdown, synthesizing journals have been set up in many of the social sciences, particularly in anthropology, history, and sociology. By all accounts they have been very successful in bringing fresh insight to problems of revision and interpretation. From present indications it seems likely that both the trend toward specialization and the movement toward integration will continue with unabated vigor.

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